

ISLAM

Material pleasures are only a mirage

By Maulana Wahiduddin Khan

On 12 November 1985, R.N. Pandey, a second lieutenant in the Indian Army, mistakenly boarded the Jammu Tawi Express, thinking it to be the Itkal Express. It was only as the train steamed out of the station that he realised he was on the wrong train.

In desperation he opened the door and jumped out of the train, which by then was hurtling along at full speed. He never reached the platform. He fell down under the train on to the railway track and was cut to pieces by the wheels. And so, at the promising age of 35, death came to claim him for its own.

The successful man who runs a lucrative industry, owns a palatial mansion, drives where he wills and possesses all kinds of status symbols, has all the things which add up to success in this world. Yet he is no more immune to misfortune than Lieutenant Pandey. At any moment his factory can close, his house can crumble around him, his cars can skid with him to destruction and his friends can one by one desert him. Those self and same things that were such glittering symbols of success can become like dross under his feet and under whose dead-weight he may be buried forever.

As soon as the true nature of material things is laid bare, they appear no more attractive than tombstones. To all intents and purposes, material progress leads one to the splendid mansions of success. But if we were to face up to the reality, we would see that it takes us only as far as the graveyard—and not one step beyond. The real pleasures then are spiritual and intellectual in nature, while material pleasures of this world are only a mirage.